

THE WASHINGTON POST

Sunday, May 18, 1952

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

Plan to Seize Berlin Reported

By Drew Pearson

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE has warned that the Communists may try to capture Berlin as the next move in the international checker game for control of Germany. Our agents have learned of a Communist plan to march East German "people's police" into Berlin and take the city by force in a propaganda bid for German unity.

The plan was supposed to have been presented to the top commanders of East Germany's "police force" at a secret meeting in Silesia. But though the Red army is reportedly masterminding the coup, Russia is supposed to remain officially aloof and pretend to be a disinterested neutral.

Gen. Bedell Smith, chief of Central Intelligence, considered the report so important that he delivered it personally to Gen. Omar Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. However, other intelligence experts point out that the Communists seldom telegraph a major move and that intelligence leaks are often deliberate.

Nevertheless, trouble on the international horizon usually comes in bunches, and top military experts have been puzzled over some other Moscow moves, all pointing to crisis:

1. The maneuvering of the Red army just north of Iran. This comes as Russia is reported on the verge of signing an oil agreement with bankrupt Iran, which, with oil short in the United States, would be a real victory.
2. The attack on the French passenger plane by the Russian military over Berlin. This was deliberate and carefully planned, probably to humiliate the French in front of the Germans.
3. The seizure of Brig. Gen. Francis Dodd, apparently planned days in advance and calculated to make us lose face throughout Japan and China. Simultaneously, Red truce negotiators have become deliberately objectionable and insulting.
4. The clearing away of civilian populations from the Russian side of the Yugoslav and Polish borders. It may have been mere scare tactics, but civilians were told that this was to save them from war damage.